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DAILY EDITION:
One Year \$3.00
One Month25
One Week06
WEEKLY EDITION:
One Year in Advance \$1.00
New York Office, 220 Broadway, (St. Paul Building)
C. A. MENET, Representative.



SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 13, 1909.

THAT "LITTLE JOKER" AGAIN.

As predicted by the Farmer, that "little joker" in the proposed charter amendments which had such an exceedingly peculiar and mysterious, though brief, existence in this city, reappeared at Hartford, Thursday. It first appeared in Mayor Lee's proposed charter amendments, as furnished to the newspapers in advance of presentation to the board of Aldermen, its detection and exposure by the Farmer followed closely, and it failed to appear in the amendments placed before the Aldermen; the explanation given being that its incorporation was "a clerical error." Its origin is still a mystery. If it was wrong in principle or effect, why was it incorporated in the amendments; if right, why was it withdrawn? Its withdrawal was practically a confession of wrong.

And if it was wrong here, why has it been renewed at Hartford? Geographical and climatic differences do not suffice to change a Bridgeport wrong into a Hartford right. Or is it the belief of the mysterious author and promoter of the "little joker" that its chances of survival are better under General Assembly examination than they would have been under Aldermanic scrutiny here—that partisan "pull," and the "powerful influences" referred to in the report of the special commission on the direct primary can push it through at Hartford but would have failed here where the attendant conditions and the assured results are fully known?

In justice to Mayor Lee, it must be said that although his harbor-line position has steadily been pro-railroad, he did not place the "little joker" before the board of Aldermen nor did it appear in the charter amendments taken to Hartford by him. Thus, so far as the public record is concerned, he stands absolved of responsibility for the "little joker." It appeared at Hartford as a separate amendment and was introduced by Representative Clark of this city.

The probable argument in its support before the committee on Cities and Boroughs, if its mysterious author decides to reveal his identity by appearing openly, will be that the omission of a certain section of the old from the new charter, was accidental and unintentional—to speak in the vogue of the day and this case, "a clerical error." This point has not as yet been proved, it is susceptible of proof.

The main question is not, however, whether the section in question was intentionally or unintentionally omitted from the new charter, but whether the omission promoted the right or the wrong. If the right, should not the omission be made permanent, instead of being changed by the "little joker" method; if the wrong, why so much mystery and such devious methods of restoration?

Perhaps these questions can be best answered by considering the effects of a restoration of the omitted section. It might enable the railroad to collect from \$174,000 to \$250,000 from the city for certain harbor area which the road never owned. That is apparently the one and only purpose of the "little joker."

The Countant is quite right in its assertion that neither Senator Platt nor Senator Hawley would have interfered, as has Senator Brandegee, in the contest over the Bridgeport City Court judgeship. In rural parlance, such interference is "small potatoes and few in the hill."

The fact that Senator Stephenson of Wisconsin, the multimillionaire lumberman, expended \$107,793 in endeavoring to secure a re-nomination through the direct primary, is not so much an argument against that method of ascertaining, definitely the popular wish as between candidates, as it is an indication that a limit, proportioned to salary, should be placed upon the expenses of candidates.

A constitutional provision and a salary increase having made Senator Knox ineligible to the Secretaryship of State under President Taft, the Senate has attempted an evasion of the constitutional provision. There has come to be altogether too much work of this kind—too frequent a resort to the principle favored by "corporation lawyers"—that "evasion of the law is equivalent to compliance with it." It indicates a growing and ominous disrespect for constitutional limitations.

The better procedure for the Electric Light Co. in its effort to protect and maintain its exclusive rights to sell electricity for power and light, is to reduce its prices so materially as to render it impossible for any one owner of property to economize by producing his own supply. That is, to sell electricity cheaper than private persons can produce it. If the company

cannot do this, one reason for its continued existence vanishes, and a very strong argument for municipal ownership is supplied.

The Bridgeport Hydraulic Co., has interposed a technical objection to action by the General Assembly upon the bill permitting the city to acquire the company's water works. This technicality is based upon the city's alleged neglect to notify certain alleged adverse parties, the towns of Stratford and Fairfield, and upon the city's failure to publicly advertise its intention. Ordinarily, such a plea is considered an avoidance of the issue, and such it evidently is in this case. If the technicality is well based, the General Assembly probably can, if it so chooses, heal the defects in the city's position.

Hon. J. J. Phelan's proposition that the question of submitting the matter of continuing to make appropriations for the city's water supply be submitted to a popular vote, is now before the General Assembly. It means, in case of a popular majority against such appropriations, an abrogation of the twenty-year contract, and would put a quibus upon differences between the boards of Aldermen and Appropriation.

The Farmer favors this application of the referendum to the water question. It has confidence in the people and in their power of right judgment. No believer in popular government can do otherwise; he who takes the contrary position, as has, we regret to say, the present mayor, denies the competency of the people to govern themselves and their affairs.

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FAIRFIELD

Lincoln Exercises—The Birthday Social
—Need of Fire Escape—Cars Derailed—Schoolmasters' Meeting.

All the schools in town were closed yesterday in honor of the centennial anniversary of the birth of Lincoln. Exercises appropriate to the occasion were held in the schools on Thursday, and consisted of recitations, the reading of the Gettysburg address, extracts from both inaugural addresses, and the singing of patriotic songs. There was a grand display of flags throughout the town, and the library and post office were closed during business hours. Last night a large audience filled the lecture room of the library to listen to the program which had been prepared by Rev. Frank S. Child, in honor of the day. Judge Perry did not deliver an original oration, as some papers had announced, but read the second inaugural address of Abraham Lincoln. "Oh, Captain, My Captain," was effectively read by Mr. Deyo. Supt. Wheatley read a well prepared synopsis of the historical or rather biographical events in the life of Lincoln. There were other appropriate exercises, and the services closed with the singing of Mrs. Howe's "Battle Hymn of the Republic."

At least forty young people attended the "Birthday Social" given at the Congregational church on Thursday evening. A delightful social hour was enjoyed, with games, music, and refreshments. The proceeds, which amount to considerable, are for some charitable purpose. A few of the ladies and gentlemen present were Mr. Benjamin Betts, Mr. Edward Osborn, Mr. J. Elting Deyo, Howard Thomas, Winfield and Ernest Thomas, John Donaldson, Roger Smith, and Misses Dorothy Smith, the Misses Glover, David and Andrew Huntington, Marion Donaldson, John and Louise Forsythe, May, Grace, and Willie West, Miss Amy Child, Arthur and Elting Deyo, Eva King, Amy Jennings, Roger Sherman Child, Eddy Ryker, Miss Ryker, Grace Rich, Helen Forsythe and others.

The ladies of the sewing society had a very pleasant afternoon yesterday at the house of Mrs. Smith, wife of the Assistant Postmaster. After an hour or two of sewing they enjoyed a basket picnic, as the custom is. In the company were Mrs. Ollie Jennings, Mrs. J. Elting Deyo, Mrs. John Forsythe, Miss Sinclair and Miss Loretta Perry.

The fact that the town of Westport has voted to place a fire escape on the Bridgeport city limits, has attracted attention to the fact that there are five schools in this town which need a fire escape. All the school houses in Westport are now supplied with them. The schools of this town which should be so provided are the Southport, the Center, Greenville, new Nichols Terrace and Stratfield. These are all well equipped, and not one of them has as good a protection against danger from fire as had the Collingswood school in Ohio, where last year so many children lost their lives.

At 2:30 p. m. Thursday afternoon the local way freight headed west while pulling out of the siding near the depot in town, to switch on the main line. The engine left the rail, pulling the head truck on the fourth car off, thus derailing two cars. This caused the blocking of traffic on the West bound main line. Traffic was diverted at once to the other east bound track, known as No. 2, without any delay to the other east bound trains. The way freight was in charge of Conductor Stumpf and Engineer Longley. The New Haven steam wrecker was sent for arriving at 4 o'clock, re-railing the cars at 4:25. The wrecker and the way train then proceeded eastward. The cars were loaded with merchandise for Bridgeport and West Haven.

Mr. John Cusack, who recently gave up his position at the depot, has secured a position as conductor with the traction company of Bridgeport. The St. Thomas Athletic club having challenged the Oneldo club for a foot race, the boys are practicing and the route has been measured off around which is known as the "square," which is a little less than a mile. Exactly when the race will be pulled off has not been announced.

The teachers of this town are enjoying very much the lectures of Prof. Judd which are being delivered in So. Norwalk.

There will be a meeting of the Schoolmasters' Round Table on the 20th inst., at Stamford, at which time the Executive Committee of the Fairfield County Teachers' Association will be called to meet, by the Chairman, Supt. William A. Wheatley for the purpose of preparing a program for the May meeting.

POLES

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Rescuing a Camel.

The camel has been called the "ship of the desert." Like the ship, he may be capsized, and in that predicament he is helpless. His manner of lying down to rest is to fold his legs beneath his body. If he happens to roll upon his side he cannot recover his feet again. This infirmity of the animal is mentioned by the Count de Lesdaine in the account of his journey, "From Peking to Sikkim."

"The caravan was made up of camels. I had brought some new ones and had no idea of taking any other animals into a country largely composed of loose sand. An amusing incident marked the beginning of our march. One camel, awkward as they all are, managed to tumble into a ditch of thick mud between the road and a wheatfield. When once fallen a camel can only get up again if it can arrange its feet conveniently under it and if the ground is nearly flat.

"In this case it was not so. The animal lay with all four feet in the air, perfectly resigned and incapable of a single movement to help itself. To draw it out took more than half an hour and required the united efforts of many men with cords passed under the camel's back."

Welcoming the Traveler.

I have always had a good opinion of the enterprise of the life insurance agent. It has seemed to me that the busy bee is a lazy ne'er-do-well compared with him. Recently this opinion has been strengthened.

An old colored servant living in a neighboring family made his first trip away from home and visited relatives in New York.

On his return to Louisiana he was asked what he did while in the north.

"Well, 'mong uddah t'ings I done tuk out a life insurance policy fo' 'n hundred dollars."

"Why, what on earth do you want with a life insurance policy? You have no wife or children?"

"Dat's what I done tol' him, but I had t' take it, all de same. 'De agent man, he met me at de boat landin', an' he said 'I haf t' have one or he'd sen me back home. He warn't gwine fo' t' low me t' land if I didn't buy one. Dey don't 'low no one in New York 'less dey has a 'substance policy'—Woman's Home Companion."

Economy of Costly Foods.

The economy of expensive foods is explained by the fact that digestion, at least in man, is dependent upon flavors, without which it is so defective that we do not obtain the good of the food we swallow. As far as experiments go, they substantiate these assertions, for the sight and smell of pleasing food start the flow of digestive fluids, while disagreeable odors and sight stop it. Delicacies, then, would seem to be staples, for they are necessary. The talk of being able to subsist on a few cents a day is simply nonsense and leads to deterioration of health. What seems to be extravagant in food purchases may be wholesome instinct. The high cost of living is partly due to the cost of the flavors we need. We commend these ideas to our worthy dietetic economists. Laymen may not be so foolish as the physiologists themselves.—American Medicine.

A Novel Method of Advertising.

A storekeeper in a small out of the way town many years ago hit upon a novel method of advertising his store. He conceived the idea of buying up the stock of stamps at the postoffice across the way. The postmaster objected to be denuded of all his stock, but his mysterious customer demanded the stamps over the counter, sheet after sheet, as an ordinary member of the public until he had bought every stamp to be had. Then he took the stock over to his store across the road and plastered his windows with notices that postage stamps were only to be had at his store, and to his mortification the postmaster had to send customers across to the store over the way for any stamps they needed until some days after he once more got in a stock from headquarters.

It is great cleverness to know how to conceal one's cleverness.—La Rochefoucauld.

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